

EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Baton Rouge, LA

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Baton Rouge for a Brownfields Pilot. Baton Rouge, population 399,105, is home to an extensive petrochemical industry that forms the backbone of the city's economy. When oil and gas markets suffered a downturn in the 1980s, Baton Rouge was particularly hard hit and, although the principal petrochemical corporations survived, many dependent small businesses failed, leaving behind a large number of inactive commercial properties throughout the city. These properties are typically located in impoverished, ethnically diverse areas, where the minority population is approximately 89 percent and almost 52 percent of the population lives below the poverty level. After being vacant for years, these properties remain undeveloped due to their perception of being crime ridden, deteriorated, and contaminated. Today, Baton Rouge is the fastest growing area in the state and new commercial properties are at a premium. Unfortunately, investors interested in developing blighted inner-city sites are hampered by both real and perceived issues of contamination and potential liability.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Baton Rouge, LA

Date of Announcement:
May 2000

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets brownfields properties throughout Baton Rouge for assessment and redevelopment.

Contacts:

City of Baton Rouge
Planning Director
(225) 389-3144

Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 6
(214) 665-6736

Visit the EPA Region 6 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6sf/bfpages/sfbfhome.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

OBJECTIVES

The Pilot will work in tandem with Baton Rouge's Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan, which was designed to return the city's dilapidated industrial properties to productive use. The goals of that program are to protect and enhance the value and character of existing urban areas, to promote development and redevelopment within the urbanized areas, to revitalize deteriorating neighborhoods, and to create and maintain accessible open space and greenbelt areas. The Pilot is consistent with the Plan and will provide the resources to perform site assessments, develop cleanup plans, encourage public involvement, and develop tools to facilitate the cleanup and redevelopment of properties.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Developing an inventory of brownfields sites and prioritizing them based on value to the neighborhood, redevelopment viability, and level of contamination;
- Performing Phase I and II assessments on the priority sites;
- Preparing redevelopment plans for sites based on the most promising reuse scenarios;
- Establishing a Brownfields Resource Center to provide comprehensive brownfields information and support to interested parties; and
- Holding a regularly scheduled discussion forum open to all brownfields stakeholders and interested parties to communicate information and resolve issues.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.